



SOJALLE: Sumatran Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Education
Volume 1, Number 1, Pages 26-51

<https://sojalle.com/index.php/san/index>

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Publisher:
The Sumatran Academic Network Foundation, Indonesia
2025

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received

August 20, 2025

Revised

September 9, 2025

Accepted

September 9, 2025

Keywords:

English language teaching

Explanatory text

Writing problems

Writing ability

Conflict of interest:

None

Funding information:

None

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ABSTRACT

This research is intended to find out the students' difficulties viewed from the writing aspect, students' understanding of explanatory texts, and the factors that influence their problems in writing explanatory texts. This research employed a mixed-method case study design that involved 35 students in grade XI IPA 4 of SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau in the academic year 2022-2023. The data were gathered using tests (a writing and an understanding test) and a semi-structured interview. The writing test was analyzed using a checklist table. The understanding test was analyzed by counting the correct answers, and the interview data were analyzed using an interactive model. The results showed that students had difficulties in content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics aspects. However, the student's difficulties in grammar were not excessively high because they used Google Translate. Furthermore, students' understanding of explanatory texts was in a lower category because their scores were predominantly under 65. Moreover, some possible factors influenced students' problems in writing and understanding explanatory texts; knowledge of generic structure, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, determining a topic, and developing a main idea, students' interest in writing lessons of explanatory text, learning English, and teachers' roles for the feedbacks that students need to evaluate and refine their mistakes in writing and understanding explanatory texts. In conclusion, students' ability in writing and understanding explanatory text lessons still needs to improve to achieve the learning objectives. The English teacher should find effective teaching strategies to solve the students' problems in writing and understanding explanatory texts.



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How to cite (APA Style):

Maretha, S., Syafryadin., & Maisarah, I. (2025). Students' writing problems and understanding ability in explanatory texts at SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau. *SOJALLE: Sumatran Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Education*, 1(1), 26-51. <https://sojalle.com/index.php/san>

1. INTRODUCTION

In Senior High Schools, learning to write is one of the four skills as a form of a student's ability to communicate through written media. In this skill, students are expected to be able to convey meaning, ideas, thoughts, and feelings through a series of written words. Those series of words are presented in the form of texts as a medium for students learning English. The success of students in writing, such as producing a good text, is an indicator of the students' achievement in learning English as a foreign language (Hudayani et al., 2018). Therefore, teachers are required to give more attention to teaching writing because writing skill is the students' skill to communicate in English.

Although writing skills have been taught by teachers when teaching English, students still have many problems with writing (Jasrial, 2019; Jasrial et al., 2025). The problems included (1) they are afraid to start writing, 2) they do not know when they must start to write, 3) writing organization, and 4) language (Trismanto, 2017). Moreover, writing requires many components, such as grammar, vocabulary, content, and punctuation (Fitriani et al., 2019). These problems and components cause writing to be a crucial and problematic skill to learn by students in Indonesia (Abas & Aziz, 2018; Asiah et al., 2020; Purnamasari et al., 2021).

The theories above are also supported by the results of the preliminary study conducted by the researcher at the school. Based on the observation carried out by the researcher in the writing lesson in the eleventh grade for two meetings on January 18th-19th, 2023, the researcher found that the students' writing ability in the explanatory text was quite low. It is shown by the students' writing scores given by the teacher. 15% of 35 students only got scores above the Minimum Criteria of the learning Mastery Standard, which is 70. It is also emphasized by the results of the interview with three students who got writing scores under the Minimum Criteria of the learning Mastery Standard. They stated that writing in English is difficult for them because they need to master many aspects of writing. It is in line with the statement of Piga (2017), writing needs a long process of training, concentration, and hard work. The writing describes students' thoughts and shares what is in their minds through written words, especially explanatory text.

Writing explanatory text is definitely not an easy matter. Explanatory text is a type of text that explains more detailed facts and socio-cultural phenomena (Hyland, 2008). This text is important for Senior High School students to master in learning English. Emilia (2012) argues that explanatory is the combination of several texts, such as description, procedure, and argumentation. Therefore, students' critical thinking

skills, the ability to explain and describe a fact accurately, and the ability to make arguments are required in the explanatory text. Moreover, the student must know the occurrence or formation of a natural or social phenomenon around them. For students who are just learning, writing explanatory text is certainly not an easy thing because they have to gather facts about the events they are going to write about (Apriyani, 2019). The quality of the explanatory text they write depends on the accuracy of the facts collected and the rules of the language used. This is because the language rules written in English will differ from the explanatory text in Indonesian, as the student's first language.

In addition, the genre of the text is related to the social context, so the point of view of the text from students' perspectives will be different. Nasrillah et al. (2019) state that some of the principles referred to the genre are (1) texts are formed because of the demands of social activities; (2) the text has a social purpose; (3) the form of the text is the result of the convention; and (4) the language of a text is functional according to social purposes. Therefore, students' understanding of explanatory is also needed in terms of the text structure, linguistic features, writing elements, and knowledge topics or issues being written.

Several researchers conducted studies concerning students' ability to write English texts such as narrative, recount, descriptive, and explanatory texts. In terms of narrative text, the studies were conducted by Amelya et al. (2022), Khairunnisaak et al. (2022), and Yuni (2015) at Junior and Senior High Schools of different grades. The results revealed that students had difficulties in language use (e.g., grammar and vocabulary), content, and mechanics. Moreover, some researchers have explored students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts and the causes of the difficulties in grade X of Senior High School (Agustin et al., 2022; Ismayanti & Kholiq, 2019) and the eighth grade of Junior High School (Afiani, 2022; Nurfidoh & Kareviati, 2021). The results revealed that students had difficulties in writing aspects, such as miss order, punctuation, tenses, diction, spelling, and prepositions.

In addition, students' difficulties in writing recount texts were studied by Husna and Multazim (2019) in the eighth grade of Junior High schools, consisting of 30 students. This study reported that students mostly had difficulty in writing two generic structures of recount text: orientation and reorientation. In terms of writing, they had problems with content, organization, grammar, and mechanics. Lastly, the students' difficulties in writing an explanatory text have been explored by Hilmawati (2021) and Aprianti (2018). These studies found that some students still have difficulties in writing an explanatory text, especially with the generic structure and language components. Moreover, studies on students' writing ability, problems, and the causes of the students' knowledge of explanatory text language components and English skills were the causes of the students having some obstacles in writing explanatory texts.

The previous studies highlight that students' difficulties and factors of the difficulties in writing explanatory texts have been explored by previous researchers.

However, the problems faced by students in understanding have not yet been explored comprehensively; they still need to be investigated more deeply in this case. The investigation of this present research is based on writing aspects to explore students' problems in understanding explanatory texts in more detail.

To fill the gap in the previous studies, this present research investigated students' problems in writing and understanding explanatory texts at grade X1 IPA 4 SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau by focusing on students' difficulties, students' understanding, and the factors causing the problems using a case study design. The findings of this present research will be useful information for English teachers to evaluate the teaching and learning of writing explanatory texts for Senior High School students, and they are suggested to find an appropriate teaching method for teaching explanatory texts. Thus, to address the problems, the research questions are formulated as follows;

1. What are the students' difficulties in writing an explanatory text?
2. How is students' understanding of the explanatory text?
3. What are the possible factors of students' problems in understanding an explanatory text?

METHOD

Research Design

The research design applied a case study mixed method because this research collected both quantitative and qualitative data, and focuses on the problems that occur in the class. According to Creswell and Clark (2018, p. 116), a mixed-method case study design is a type of mixed-method study in which the quantitative and qualitative data collection, results, and integration are used to provide in-depth evidence for a case or develop a case for comparative analysis. Thus, researchers must collect research data in the form of quantitative and qualitative data

Research Participants

The participants of this research were the eleventh-grade 4 students of MIPA (Mathematics and Natural Sciences) of Senior High School Number 2 of Lubuklinggau in the academic year 2022-2023. The total number of participants was 34 students, who consisted of 11 males and 23 females. They were taken based on the purposive sampling technique. Creswell (2017) states that purposive sampling is a sampling technique that is based on certain considerations. The consideration in taking the participants of this research was that the students in grade XI IPA 4 had the lowest English ability in writing skills. It means that those students had difficulties in writing explanatory texts that needed to be investigated deeply and comprehensively

Instruments and Procedures

The data of this research were collected through students' writing tests of explanatory text, understanding tests of explanatory text, and interviews. The topic of the writing test given to the students was free. The understanding test contained 20 items of

questions regarding the explanatory text in the form of multiple choice and it was distributed through Google Forms. The interviews were carried out with 15 students who met the minimal criteria of achievement. The type of interviews used in this research were semi-structured interviews. It aimed to get more comprehensive information regarding the problems of the research.

Data Analysis Procedures

The students' writing test was analyzed using a checklist. The checklist was built based on the writing rubric that was developed based on Brown's (2007, p. 352) theory. The interview data of this research were analyzed qualitatively by using an interactive model based on Miles et al. (2014). It consisted of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The data obtained from the understanding test of explanatory text was analyzed by counting the number of correct and incorrect answers. The students' scores were interpreted based on the following table;

Table 1.

Interpretation of the Students' Understanding Test of Explanatory Text

Score Range	Interpretation
86 – 100	Very Good
66 – 85	Good
46 – 65	Enough
<45	Less

Taken from Arikunto (2016, p.75)

FINDINGS

The Students' Difficulties in Writing an Explanatory Text

This research question aimed to find out students' difficulties in writing an explanatory text. The data for this research question were obtained from students' writing tests of explanatory text. There were 35 students who participated in this research. The student's difficulties were viewed from a writing aspect. After analyzing data, the results are presented in the following table;

Table 2.

The Results of the Students' Writing on Explanatory Texts

Components of Writing	Score	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Content	4	Very Good	5	14.28%
	3	Good	11	31.43%
	2	Poor	17	48.57%

	1	Very Poor	2	5.71%
	4	Very Good	5	14.28%
	3	Good	6	17.14%
Organization	2	Poor	23	65.71%
	1	Very Poor	1	2.86%
	4	Very Good	4	11.43%
Vocabulary	3	Good	13	37.14%
	2	Poor	17	31.43%
	1	Very Poor	1	2.86%
	4	Very Good	1	2.86%
Grammar	3	Good	21	60.00%
	2	Poor	11	31.43%
	1	Very Poor	2	5.71%
	4	Very Good	2	5.71%
Mechanics	3	Good	11	31.43%
	2	Poor	19	54.29%
	1	Very Poor	3	8.57%

As presented in Table 7, students in grade XI IPA 4 of SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau had difficulties in three aspects of writing: content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics. Meanwhile, students were good at vocabulary and grammar. Among those aspects, the most severe difficulty they experienced in writing explanatory texts was organization, followed by mechanics, content, and vocabulary.

Students' Understanding of Explanatory Texts

This research question aimed to investigate students' understanding of explanatory texts. It was measured using an understanding test of explanatory text. The test consisted of twenty questions and was shared using Google Forms. The results are presented as follows;

Table 3.

The Results of the Understanding Test of Explanatory Text

No	Obtained Score	Number of students
1	10	1
2	15	2
3	20	2
4	25	3
5	30	2
6	35	2
7	40	4
8	50	4

9	55	4
10	60	7
11	65	1
12	70	2
13	75	1
Total		35
Median		50
Average Score		44.71
Interpretation		Less

As presented in Table 13, the result of the student's understanding test of explanatory texts was lower. Their average score was 44.71. Of 35 students, only three got scores from 65 to 75, while others were under 65. One student got 65. Two students got 70, and one student got 75.

Table 4.

Interpretation of the Students' Understanding Test of Explanatory Text

Score Range	Interpretation	Number of Students
86 – 100	Very Good	0
66 – 85	Good	3
46 - 65	Enough	16
<45	Less	16

Arikunto (2016, p. 127)

As presented in Table 14, based on the results of the students' understanding test of explanatory texts, three students had a good understanding of explanatory texts. Sixteen students had enough understanding of the explanatory text. Sixteen students had a less understanding of the explanatory text. It means that students' understanding of explanatory texts was still low.

The Possible Factors of Students' Problems in Writing Explanatory Texts

This research question aimed to find out the possible factors of students' problems in writing explanatory texts in grade XI IPA 4 at SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau. The data for this question were obtained from interviews. There were ten students interviewed for this question. After students lacked learning writing, lacked knowledge of the language, and lacked knowledge of the explanatory text, the teacher took on a role. The following is an explanation of each factor found in the interviews;

Lack of Knowledge of the Structure of the Explanatory Text

The factor of knowledge of explanatory text also influenced students in writing explanatory texts. This knowledge was expressed differently by some students. These factors included constructing text structures. The students' statements are as follows;

“The difficulties that I frequently faced in writing an explanatory text include text structure and the content of the text, choosing an appropriate language (vocabulary), finding accurate information, and determining important points that should be provided” (ATF, April 6th, 2023).

The student's statement above showed that the student's knowledge of explanatory text was still problematic. He seemed not to understand the generic structure of the explanatory text, such as the things that should be provided in each structure of the text to support his statements in the text. It could be in the second generic structure of the explanatory text, namely the series of events. Another statement was added by the following student;

“... writing structure and using language, and **differing between explanation and general limitation**” (SWA, April 6th, 2023)

The statements above showed that a student did not understand the structure of the explanatory texts, so it was difficult for her to differentiate between explanation and general explanation. In other words, students did not understand the structure of the general statements and the series of explanations/events in the explanatory texts.

Difficult to Determine a Topic for Explanatory Text

Determining a topic for explanatory text seemed difficult for students when writing an explanatory text. It is stated as follows;

“My difficulties are usually in grammar and determining the topics of explanation text” (ATF, April 6th, 2023).

“The difficulties that I faced in writing an explanation text are: determining an interesting topic, ...” (SWA, April 6th, 2023).

“In the process of writing explanatory text, I am quite confused about determining the issue being discussed” (EL, April 6th, 2023).

The statements above revealed that students had difficulty determining explanatory text topics. Moreover, their statements showed that they also did not understand the structure of the explanatory texts, so it was difficult for them to differentiate between explanation and general explanation. In other words, students did not understand the

structure of the general statements and the series of explanations/events in the explanatory texts.

Difficult to Develop Main Ideas in the Paragraphs of an Explanatory Text

Based on the results of the interviews, students had problems developing the main ideas of a paragraph of an explanatory text. The following are the students' statements;

"Determining a topic being discussed, **finding out information to develop a main idea**, and last, constructing a text becomes one" (NPP, April 6th, 2023)

The statement above shows that developing a main idea in a paragraph when writing an explanatory text seemed difficult for them. Students had difficulty finding information and collecting data to support the main idea.

Lack of Interest in Writing Explanatory Text

Based on the interview results, students said they lacked interest in writing skills. This factor seemed to contribute to students' difficulties in writing explanatory texts. The statements taken from students' interviews are shown as follows;

"I do not like writing, including explanatory text. To me, writing makes me tired" (NA, April 6th, 2023).

"I do not really like (writing) because I like reading" (EM, April 6th, 2023).

"**I do not like (writing) because it is exhausting and boring.** I prefer reading to writing" (NPP, April 6th, 2023).

The statements in the interviews above showed that students did not like studying writing, especially writing explanatory text. They preferred learning reading skills to writing skills. Learning to write, such as explanatory text, often made them tired and bored. Writing challenged students' minds about the things that would be written in a text.

Lack of Knowledge of Grammar and Vocabulary for Explanatory Text

In this factor, a lack of English knowledge influenced students to write explanatory texts. The English knowledge included grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The statements of the students in the interviews are as follows;

"My difficulties are usually in **grammar** and determining a topic of explanation text. For grammar, **my friends and I translate using a Google translation machine**, so the grammar will be more accurate." (NPP, April 6th, 2023)

Based on the student's statement above, it can be known that the student had a problem with grammar, but she solved it using a translation machine through Google Translate. The grammar quality of her writing product (explanatory text) would be better. If she did it by herself, the grammar quality was very bad because the grammar was very complicated for her. This way was not only done by her but also by her friends. The other student also stated the same problem; it is as follows;

"To me, the difficulties in writing an explanatory text using English are **constructing grammar and** determining an interesting opinion/issue to be discussed" (FL, April 6th, 2023).

This student had problems constructing grammar correctly because it had many rules that must be followed. This factor influenced her in writing an explanatory text. In addition, another issue in English language knowledge was conveyed by the student below;

"The difficulty in writing an explanatory text was determining a topic that would be right. **The difficulties in writing include grammar. It is difficult to construct sentences based on the grammar formula/rules. The difficulty in writing was also in terms of vocabulary due to a lack of knowledge.** Difficulty in writing organization/text structure can be in terms of constructing words correctly. **The difficulty in writing can also be in terms of mechanics because I do not know the rules.**" (KAS, April 6th, 2023)

The statement above showed that the student had problems with three aspects of writing: grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The student did not understand the rules of English grammar. The student had limited English vocabulary mastery. The student did not understand the use of mechanics in writing. It could be in terms of dots, commas, spellings, capital letters, etc.

Lack of Interest in Learning English, Specifically Writing Explanatory Text

Based on the results of the interviews, most students were not interested in learning English. It influenced students to have difficulty in writing and understanding an explanatory text. They stated that English was complicated and had many rules. It is shown in the following statements;

"I do not really like it because I cannot speak English fluently and have a little less understanding of some of the material" (NPN, April 6th, 2023)

The students' responses above showed that this student had less motivation to learn English. Her English ability was still low. Also, she stated that some English materials seemed difficult for her to study, which influenced her to learn English as expected.

“I do not really like English because I cannot speak English fluently because **it has many rules**. For example, **when I write an explanatory text**, I often make mistakes in spelling and grammar” (TMR, April 6th, 2023)

“I do not really like English because of many grammar rules and other things that must be considered, for example, the way to read the English letters sometimes is different for certain letters (KF, April 6th, 2023).

The interviews above showed that students did not like studying English for several reasons; English had many rules, and students’ English ability was still low, which influenced them to speak English well. The rules that students mean might be in terms of grammar, the voice of some English letters, and mechanics, such as incorrect spelling.

“I do not really like English because it is highly difficult when it is pronounced. I often made mistakes in pronouncing them (English words) because the letters are the same as in Indonesia, but the pronunciation is different (NP, April 6th, 2023)

The above statement showed that this student did not like studying English because she had difficulty pronouncing English words correctly. The letters of English and Indonesian were the same, but those words were pronounced differently. It seemed difficult for her to differentiate between English and Indonesian. As a result, she often made mistakes in pronouncing English words correctly.

Teachers’ Roles for Students’ Explanatory Texts

Based on the results of the interviews, the researcher found that teachers’ roles influenced students’ difficulties in writing explanatory texts. Based on the students’ statements, their English teachers did not always give feedback regarding the students’ writing of explanatory texts. The following are their statements;

“She sometimes gives feedback, sometimes does not, for the explanatory that I write” (KAS, April 6, 2023).

“Because **there is no feedback**, it makes it difficult to know whether the explanatory text that I have written is correct or not” (MD, April 6th, 2023)

Based on the students’ statements, the teachers hardly gave feedback on the students’ explanatory texts. It made them confused about whether their texts were suitable or not. The teacher’s feedback seemed necessary for the betterment of their writing

DISCUSSION

The Students' Difficulties in Writing an Explanatory Text

The research question aimed to find out students' difficulties in writing explanatory texts. The results of the investigation of students' explanatory texts showed that students had difficulties in each aspect of writing, but the difficulties were not dominant in grammar. These difficulties that students had in writing explanatory texts might be caused by many factors, as stated by students in the interviews, namely students' interest in learning English, students' English language knowledge, students' writing interest, knowledge of the explanatory text, and English teachers' roles. These factors may come from the teacher who does not give much motivation to them to write. Second, teachers have no idea how to teach writing effectively (Rahmawati et al., 2019).

The results of this research are aligned with Hilmawati (2021), Meladina (2019), and Aprianti (2018). These studies reported that students' difficulties in writing explanatory text included grammar, organization, and mechanics. Moreover, for other texts, such as recount text (Amelya et al., 2022; Khairunnisaak et al., 2022; Yuni, (2015). The results revealed that students had difficulties in language use (e.g., grammar and vocabulary), content, and mechanics. For descriptive texts (Ismayati & Kholiq, 2019; Agustin et al., 2022; Afiani, 2022; Nurfidoh & Kareviati, 2021), the results revealed that students had difficulties in writing aspects such as miss order, punctuation, tenses, diction, spelling, and prepositions. Those difficulties were caused by students' lack of interest in English, motivation in writing, the generic structure of the descriptive text, grammar knowledge, and teacher feedback.

The difficulties that students faced in writing aspects influence students' work in explanatory texts. Most students cannot produce explanatory texts perfectly. It will affect the goals of English teaching and learning in school. Text types, for example, explanatory text that students learn and write, are a medium for students in learning English (Adi, 2019). In this text, they will try to apply their English skills in written form.

In terms of the content aspect, most students in grade XI IPA 4 of SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau had difficulties in the content aspect when writing explanatory texts. These difficulties were viewed from paragraph development, so the content was poor. The information was not provided completely. This problem may happen because of students' knowledge of the topic that they choose for their explanatory texts. As a result, they had difficulty developing their content well. In the explanatory text, the content will be dominantly found and provided in the second generic structure (a series of explanations), but it is stated shortly in the first generic structure (thesis statement). In this structure, the writer will explain the detailed sequence of events, illustrations, and flow charts to develop relationships as well (Zebua, 2022). The sequence of events/explanations will be developed properly to achieve the communicative functions of the text

In terms of the organization aspect, students in grade XI IPA 4 of SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau had difficulties with the organization aspect when writing explanatory texts. It shows that the organization of students' explanatory text was still problematic. It is in line with the statement of Hamameh et al. (2018) who claim that a lack of understanding and awareness of text structure would cause difficulties for them in learning a text. Brown (2000) states that organizational aspects and presentation include the facts of the story, the means of the story, cohesiveness, the elements of the story, and the presentation of the story sequence.

Based on the analysis results, most students' explanatory texts did not have a closing structure, which is an important element of this text. It means that students likely do not know how to provide a closing structure. For example, they may teach them to identify the signal words or clues that show the relationship between sentences or paragraphs. Koda (2005) highlights this statement because teaching text structures to students explicitly will help them know how to write text according to the type and the purpose of the text, so that they can develop the paragraphs in a text well. Also, recognizing the structure of a text can help students focus on key concepts and relationships, anticipate what will happen next, and monitor their understanding while reading.

In terms of grammar, students in grade XI IPA 4 of SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau had difficulties with grammar when writing explanatory texts, but they did not predominantly face them. It might be because they used Google Translate to write explanatory texts. They can access it using their mobile phones. The reason for using this tool is to minimize grammatical errors, because even though it is not as good as the way human beings translate the source language into the target language (Fitria, 2021). A study conducted by Sumiati et al. (2022) revealed that the accuracy of Google Translate reached 79.57% in translating procedural texts and 86% in narrative texts. The use of Google Translate is quite effective in minimizing grammatical errors.

Based on the findings for the grammar aspect, the use of Google Translate still shows that grammar seems complicated for them. Syafryadin et al. (2022) argue that English grammar is still regarded as difficult language knowledge for students, especially *tenses*, auxiliary modals, pronouns, and other rules. In the explanatory text, the language features used include simple present, abstract nouns (no visible nouns), passive voice, action verbs, conjunctions, etc. (Jasrial, 2019). It means that many grammar rules that students must master to write this text, so these rules may make them use Google Translate. However, grammar is a bone of language and influences learning other language skills because a sentence or utterance can be arranged without grammar (Yunita, 2016; Yunita et al., 2018). Therefore, this issue should be solved to achieve the goals of English teaching and learning in schools.

In terms of vocabulary, students in grade XI IPA 4 of SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau had difficulties with vocabulary mastery when writing explanatory texts. Vocabulary mastery significantly influences learning and mastering the English language because it affects four English skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) and

grammar. This opinion is emphasized by Rubin and Thompson (1994; as cited in Hanifa, 2013), language learners would have difficulties mastering a language without mastering or understanding a certain number of vocabulary words, including writing an explanatory text. So, the number of vocabulary words that students master is highly influenced by their ability to write an explanatory text.

In terms of mechanics, students in grade XI IPA 4 of SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau had difficulties with mechanics when writing explanatory texts. This finding shows that students' understanding of using punctuation (comma and dot), capitalization (uppercase and lowercase), and spelling is still low. Mechanical elements make writing consistent and clear, and the readers can understand the points that the writers write in the text well (Abbas & Asy'ari, 2019). In other words, using correct mechanics will add to the writing quality of students' explanatory texts and vice versa. The use of incorrect mechanics disturbs the readers in reading and understanding the contents of the text. The aim of using capitalization is to help the reader easily read the passage, while punctuation is used to indicate the rise or pause of the tone and to indicate where to stop (Abbas & Asy'ari, 2019). Therefore, using incorrect capitalization and punctuation may confuse readers and make it challenging to get the meaning of a paragraph.

Students' Understanding of Explanatory Texts

This research aimed to investigate students' understanding of explanatory texts. The results showed that students' scores were in a lower category. It means that students' understanding of the explanatory text was still low. They seem not to understand how to write an explanatory text properly based on the communicative purpose and structure of the text. It is in line with the statement of Sudijono (2011), who states that a student can be said to understand something if the student can give some explanation or detailed description using his/her own language. In other words, students who have a good understanding of the explanatory text will be able to write it in terms of writing aspects: content, organization, mechanism, vocabulary, and grammar.

Based on the theory, two factors influence understanding: internal and external factors (Purwanto, 1996). The internal factor is a person's ability to think using their intellect. It means that it depends on someone's intelligence. The external factor is in the form of factors from people who say, explain, and inform because it will affect someone's understanding (Hamalik, 2002). If it is a good way of delivery, then people will more easily understand and vice versa. Thus, based on this theory, it can be assumed that the way teachers deliver explanatory text material could influence students' understanding of writing this text. The teacher's role significantly influences students' understanding and knowledge of the explanatory text, especially when writing explanatory text.

The result of this research is incompatible with the result of the study conducted by Salsabila et al. (2020) at grade XI SMAN 4 Pontianak in the Academic

Year 2020/2021. This study found that there were no students who met the criteria of assessment, as students' understanding of how to write explanatory text was limited. It focused on the language error aspect. It may be because students wrote the explanatory text in Indonesian. Indonesian was the students' first language, so they did not seem to have language errors. They have good knowledge of the Indonesian structure.

In conclusion, students' understanding of the explanatory text is essential before they write an explanatory text. The students' understanding will guide them in writing the explanatory text. It includes students' understanding of linguistics (grammar, vocabulary, content, mechanics, and organization) and non-linguistics (students' interests, motivation, teachers' roles, and others).

The Possible Factors of Students' Problems in Writing Explanatory Texts

This research question aimed to find out the possible factors that influence students' problems in writing explanatory texts. The results of the interviews revealed that some factors influenced students' problems to write explanatory texts, namely, students' interest in learning English, students' interest in writing, lack of English language knowledge, lack of knowledge of explanatory texts, and teachers' roles.

The results of this research question were also found by Meladina (2019) who reported that the causes of the students' problems in writing explanatory text at SMAN 1 Batusangkar, Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatra Province included the students' knowledge of the explanatory text, language components, and their' English skills. However, the present research found more factors that caused students' difficulties in writing explanatory texts at SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau. The differences that might have happened might be caused by the differences in students' English ability, classroom conditions, students' characteristics, and teachers' backgrounds.

The results revealed that students' knowledge of explanatory text was still problematic. It can be seen from the structure of their texts that they did not understand the structure of explanatory texts. This text type requires students to explore deeply and in detail the topic that they write about in each generic structure of the explanatory text. According to Trianto (2020; as cited in Sari et al., 2020). Explanatory text is a type of text that explains why/how in written articles, speeches/lectures, scientific (popular), and letter tasks. This text has a general statement thinking structure (opening), a series of explanations (contents), and an interpretation (closing) (Mahsun, 2014). In the content, students will develop their ideas and information well to achieve the communication purpose of this text.

Based on the explanation above, knowledge of the explanatory text is important for students before they start writing the text. If not, the students will fail to write it because the explanatory text is a combination of some texts, namely description, procedure, and argumentative (Emilia, 2012). The students must be able to differentiate the differences among those texts because they are slightly similar.

Moreover, Suherly (2017, p. 83) explains that there are two linguistic features of explanatory text that students must master, namely causal conjunctions and chronological conjunctions. Causality Conjunctions are because, therefore, because of, etc. Conjunctions that include conjunctions chronologically, i.e., then, then, after that, and finally (Sari et al., 2020). Thus, the completeness of rules, structures, and language features that explanatory text has may have influenced students' interest in mastering this text type in English.

Regarding determining a topic, the results of the interviews showed that it got difficult for students to determine a topic for explanatory text. There are some possible reasons why students have difficulty determining a topic. The students did not have any ideas, references, or information. The same reasons were also found by Meladina (2019), who reported that students at SMAN 1 Batusangkar did not have any ideas about the topic; they did not have any references to write about the topic discussed; they did not have enough vocabulary to write. Even though they know about the process or the reason why something happened, it seems that they did not know how to write it down in English. Next, the students did not seem to know how to use the correct word in the appropriate context of the sentence. Thus, students' knowledge and references seem to influence them to have a topic for explanatory text.

In terms of developing main ideas, the results of the interviews showed that students needed help to develop main ideas for each paragraph of an explanatory text. It implies that the paragraphs of students' explanatory texts still need to be elaborated to develop their main ideas into good paragraphs. Therefore, students' knowledge of their writing topic should be improved. They can read a lot of references from the Internet or books.

In addition, if students have problems developing the main ideas, the purpose or communicative goals of the explanatory texts will be difficult to achieve. It is because the main idea is an idea to develop a paragraph. It tells what the writer would like to explore about the topic (Ad et al., 2014). The main idea must be supported by supporting sentences that contain information and facts. Thus, students need to improve their skills in determining the main idea of a paragraph. In this case, a teacher should find an appropriate method to help with this problem so they can produce a good explanatory text.

The result showed that students' interest in learning English was low. This factor might have influenced students to write good-quality explanatory texts. Interest is defined as a student's attitude and feeling of pleasure toward the lesson. Students who have a higher interest will be more active and enthusiastic in learning activities (Pratiwi et al., 2022). For example, students who are interested in learning English will continue to practice English and like the English subject. Thus, interest can be regarded as a positive attitude that can motivate students to pay attention to and enjoy the learning activities until the end.

Interest is one of the factors that can affect a student's achievement in learning. In other words, students' interest is very crucial for EFL students because it motivates

them to learn English (Ainia, 2020), and it is a key factor that influences the success of second/foreign language learning (Tambunan & Siregar, 2016; Yusipa et al., 2022). It is assumed that students' motivation is very crucial in learning English, especially writing skills, because writing skills are regarded as more complicated skills than other skills in foreign language learning.

Regarding students' interest in writing, the results revealed that students' interest in writing was low, especially in writing explanatory texts. These statements imply that students who have less interest in learning English will be affected in mastering writing skills. One of the skills is writing an explanatory text. The students' preferred reading over writing may be caused by the fact that writing is a form of thought, so they would think harder about their ideas, and they have to master the principles of writing and thinking that will help them achieve their aim (Handayani & Kusmiatun, 2020). Tarigan (2008, p. 7) points out that good writing is the communication of thoughts and feelings effectively. The purpose of writing is to project something for oneself, so one needs more effort to do it. It is in line with students' statements, which state that writing is boring and makes them tired.

Based on the explanation above and the results of the research, the researcher concludes that students' interest in learning English has a significant impact. This is caused by internal and external factors of students (Ariastuti et al., 2014). These factors can come from the students themselves (internal factors), teachers (external factors), and support services (external factors).

In addition, the main task of learning media is to increase student motivation and avoid boredom while studying. English teachers can work with several technological devices in the process of teaching and learning English, which has been proven effective in improving learning activities (Hadijah et al., 2020). Media can also be an effective tool if teachers know how to package media into activities to help students learn writing skills. On the other hand, the media can reduce student interest in learning if the media used is not packaged properly or is not appropriate to the subject matter. In other words, the media will become a kind of catalyst for shared responsibility in learning.

Regarding students' English language knowledge, this research found that students lacked English language knowledge, especially grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. Language knowledge is the outer appearance or language structure that is mastered by language learners. Both grammar and vocabulary are related to each other because a sentence is arranged using a series of vocabulary and grammar. Then, it is completed using mechanics to make it clearer and easier to understand. These components are also known as language components.

In terms of English teachers' roles, the result showed that teachers hardly gave feedback on students' work. It can be assumed that students need corrective feedback for their work, in this case, explanatory texts. Sujarwati et al. (2020) claim that teachers should give corrective feedback to react to the effort of students, enhance their writing ability, and justify the grade obtained by the students. Providing corrective feedback

will help students to be good writers, especially when written correctly. Written corrective feedback is defined as a written response from the teacher in terms of linguistic errors in a text that aims to help students know and learn from their mistakes (Yunus, 2020). From the written corrective feedback, students will revise their mistakes, and their writing skills can improve.

Providing corrective feedback on students' work is one of the teacher's roles in foreign language learning. The teacher's role is as a facilitator who regulates the conditions and activities that will be carried out by students and occur in the classroom during the learning and teaching process (Siddiqui & Ahamed, 2020). The teacher's roles aim to facilitate the learning activities in the classroom by helping, guiding, and providing a conducive environment for students to make learning easy. Therefore, a teacher should do many things in the classroom when teaching English. Moreover, the teacher should be sensitive to the obstacles students face in learning.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that factors that influence students' difficulties are internal and external. The internal factors included students' interest in English, students' interest in learning writing, students' English language knowledge, and students' knowledge of the explanatory text. The external factor includes the English teacher's role, who hardly provides feedback on students' work.

Moreover, the difficulties and factors influencing students in writing explanatory text show that the teaching and learning process in school needs to be improved by teachers. It aims to reduce or solve all obstacles that students face in learning English, which is a foreign language. Teachers should find appropriate teaching strategies and learning media to teach writing. López(2018) and Hadijah et al. (2020) believe that both of them are vital to the success of teaching and learning English because they are related to each other. Learning media is a valuable instructional tool that can help make learning more effective and interesting(Adi, 2019). Thus, the improvement in students' writing skills is important for the concerned teacher.

CONCLUSION

This research has investigated students' difficulties, students' understanding, and possible factors of students' problems in understanding explanatory texts in grade XI IPA 4 of SMAN 2 Lubuklinggau. Based on the research results, writing explanatory texts seems difficult for students. These difficulties are shown in each aspect of writing, namely content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. However, the difficulty in the grammar aspect is not excessively significant for them because some of them used Google Translate in writing explanatory texts. Meanwhile, the difficulties of other aspects were at a poor level. In addition, Students' understanding of the explanatory text was in the lower category. It shows that students' understanding of how to write an explanatory text was low, so they had difficulty writing the explanatory text properly and correctly based on the communicative purpose and structure of the explanatory text. Some factors influenced

students' problems to understand explanatory texts; namely, linguistic and non-linguistic factors that come from within and outside the students.

Regarding the conclusion of the research, the researcher proposes some suggestions. The findings of this research gives a reflection for English teachers at SMAN 2 Lubukinggau on how students learn English and learn to write explanatory texts. Moreover, this research can be an input for the English teacher to be aware of her teaching strategies that can be used in improving students' writing skills in the explanatory text. English teachers should improve students' understanding of explanatory text before they write it. The teacher should explain the explanatory text in detail to students. For example, the generic structure, language features, and writing aspect. It can be done in reading skills, especially in explanatory text. This research is limited to students' difficulties based on writing aspects and factors that influence students' difficulties in writing explanatory texts. This investigation is viewed from students' perspectives. Therefore, further research is suggested to investigate teachers' teaching strategies in writing explanatory texts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank teachers and students who have allowed us to conduct this research.

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APPENDICES

Writing Rubrics for Explanatory Text

Components of writing	Score	Level	Indicators
Content	4	Very Good	Present the information with well-chosen details across the paragraph
	3	Good	Present the information with details in parts of the paragraph
	2	Poor	Present the information with some details
	1	Very Poor	Present no clear information
Organization	4	Very Good	Fluent expression, the idea clearly stated/supported, succinct, well organized, logical sequencing, cohesive
	3	Good	Somewhat choppy, and loosely organized the main ideas and out, with limited support, logical but incomplete sequencing
	2	Poor	Non-fluent, ideas confused or disconnected, lacks logical sequencing and development
	1	Very Poor	Does not communicate, has no organization, or is not enough to evaluate.
Vocabulary	4	Very Good	Good in vocabulary choice
	3	Good	Error in vocabulary choice are few and do not interfere with understanding
	2	Poor	Error in vocabulary choice is and sometimes they interfere with understanding
	1	Very Poor	Many errors in vocabulary choice that severally interfere with understanding
Grammar	4	Very Good	Good in grammar
	3	Good	Errors in grammar choice are few and do not interfere with understanding

	2	Poor	Errors in grammar choice are and sometimes they interfere with understanding
	1	Very Poor	Many errors in grammar choice that severally interfere with understanding
Mechanics	4	Very Good	Good in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
	3	Good	Error in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are few
	2	Poor	Error in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, and sometimes interfere with understanding
	1	Very Poor	Error in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization and severely interfere with understanding

The Test Item Specification

NO	Writing Aspect	Indicator	Item Number
1	Content	The purpose of the explanatory text	2
		Information/Content of the explanatory text	3, 19
		Constructing information in a paragraph	16
		Determining a topic	17
		Determining the main idea	18
2	Organization	The chronological order of the information in the explanatory text	5
		Generic structure	1, 4, 5, 6, 12
3	Grammar	The use of the conjunction	7
		Type of verbs	8
		Time connective expressions	10
4	Vocabulary	Type of noun	9
		Word choice/synonym	11, 20
5	Mechanics	The use of a comma	13
		The use of a point/dot	14

		Capital letter: Lower and Upper Cases	15
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Interview Questions

1. Do you like studying English? Why?
2. Do you like studying writing? Why?
3. Tell me, what is explanatory text?
4. What are the structures of explanatory text?
5. How do you go about writing an explanatory text?
6. Tell me about your writing process for an explanatory text?
7. What difficulties do you face in writing an explanatory text?
8. Does your teacher use some media in teaching writing an explanatory text?
9. Do learning media help you in understanding and writing an explanatory text?
10. Does your teacher give some feedback on your writing (explanatory text)?
11. (if yes) Does the feedback improve your writing ability?
12. Does the teaching method for learning writing explanatory text affect your understanding of writing an explanatory text?